

Pupil Attendance Policy

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SECTION 1 - Rationale / Statement Of Intent

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Department for Education guidance *School attendance* (2016)

- Schools and local authorities should:
 - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
 - Ensure every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
 - Act early to address patterns of absence

Parents must perform their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age who are registered to a school attend regularly. All pupils must be punctual to their lessons.

The purpose of this Policy Document, therefore, is to set out the ways in which matters of attendance and punctuality will be managed in this school, in order to ensure school and parents work together to achieve and maintain high standards of attendance.

Hook Junior School is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

At Hook Junior School, we aim to work closely with parents/carers to achieve and maintain high standards of attendance. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying, pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines and the planning of lessons so may affect adversely the learning of other pupils in the same class.
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with. Friendships, self-esteem and confidence can be affected when children are absent from school and class routines and miss planned programmes of work.

- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training
- your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

SECTION 2 - Operating the policy

2.1 Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular/weekly home school bulletin/newsletter/website
- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings
- set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in the school
- run events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

2.2i Responsibilities of parents and carers

What the law says that parents have to do?

This advice summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents. These requirements are contained in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law. It states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- a) To age, ability and aptitude and
- b) To any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

The government expects parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of The Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Children in education are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. Whilst being encouraged to attain high attendance and arrive at school on time children must not carry the blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas. It is vital that children enjoy coming into school.

Parents will:

- inform the school on the first day of absence
- discuss with the tutor/class teacher any planned absences well in advance
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

2.2ii Responsibilities of the school's attendance leader

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence

A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

2.2iii Responsibilities of classroom staff

- Ensure that all children are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with children at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with parents at the earliest opportunity when a child's absence causes concern
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

2.2iv Responsibilities of children

The government expects children to be punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

In order to achieve this, Hook Junior School will:

- Promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere in school, where children feel safe and that their presence is valued.
- Promote parents' support of this policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.
- Create attitudes towards high standards of attendance and punctuality, which pupils should retain throughout life.
- Ensure that attendance is maintained effectively and absences or late attendances are followed up promptly.
- Meet legal requirements, with particular reference to identifying unauthorised absence.
- Keep accurate registration documents identifying authorised and unauthorised absences and check registers regularly, to note unexplained absences and identify patterns of absence and lateness if they are occurring
- Raise parental awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality, through a variety of strategies
- Involve other agencies e.g. Locality Team, Children's Services, Parent Support Advisor, Educational Psychologists, Social Services etc. when difficulties arise, and the school needs extra support or help as appropriate.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the School Policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.
- Ensure good liaison when a change of school occurs.

SECTION 3

3.1 Recording Attendance

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. Learning begins at the start of the school day. If your child is late they can miss learning time, work or instructions from their teacher; this causes disruption to the lesson for others and it can be embarrassing for the child concerned leading to possible further absence.

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day at 8.40am and again for the afternoon session at 1.05pm

Registration

This process is undertaken electronically. The procedure for daily school registration is outlined below. The register is a legal document and may be used as evidence in a Court of Law.

- Registers should be accurate and completed on-line.
- Any alterations must be unambiguous.
- Children must not mark the register under any circumstances.

Morning registration

- The school day begins at 8.40am and **all pupils are expected to be in school at this time.**
- Morning registration will take place at 8.45am
- Children arriving after 8.46am-8.55am will be marked as **'late before registration closes' (L)**
- Children arriving after 8.55am will be marked as **'late after registration closes' and the absence will be unauthorised (U)**

Afternoon registration

- Afternoon registration for all years will take place at 1.05pm

Monitoring

The registers will be monitored daily by the Admin Officer, Assistant Admin Officer, Senior Leadership team and in some cases the Business Manager to ensure that all absence on that day is accounted for. The registers will be monitored weekly by the Admin Officer who will enter the data on SIMS.

The Admin Officer will bring issues of concern to the Headteacher's attention.

The teachers have a responsibility to monitor their children's class attendance on a daily basis. They will inform their Phase Leader of any patterns of absence or concerns.

The Senior Leadership Team and Governors will monitor overall school attendance figures and attendance figures specific to pupil groups.

3.2 Lateness and Punctuality

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action** (see Section 6 for further detail).

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, the school or Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice in accordance with Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* (See Section 6 of this policy for further detail).

- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded 'U' in line with Hampshire County Council and Department for Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but it is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded 'M'. Where possible medical and dental appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. Appointment cards must be provided for any appointments taken in school time
- Children arriving after 8.46am will be marked as 'late before registration closes'. If they arrive after 8.55am they will be marked as 'late after registration closes' which will count as an unauthorised absence.
- If your child has a persistent late record, or there is a pattern of lateness you will receive a letter and /or be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem.
- If it is known in advance that a child is going to be late (due to an appointment) a written note must be given to the teacher the day before, which will then be passed to the Office.
- The school day ends at 3.20pm. Parents and carers are to collect your child promptly. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies. If one is available, the school will place a child into an after-school club and provide the parent/carer with the bill.

3.3 What to do if my child is absent?

3.3i First day absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent **you must**:

- notify the school by 9.00am on the day of absence
- send a written note/letter in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence - parents must do this even if you have already telephoned the school.

If your child is absent we will:

- telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child’s safety as well as their regular school attendance
- invite you in to discuss the situation with a senior leader and if absences persist
- refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council’s Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

3.3ii Third day absence

If a child is still absent and there has been no contact from the parents/carers we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquires to known friends and wider family. We may visit the family home to try and establish contact.

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start *child missing in education* procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance.

3.3iii Ten days’ absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is *at risk of missing*. Children’s Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

3.3iv Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as ***persistent absentees***. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance **falls below 95%**. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education.

If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 95% we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, will:

- issue parents with an attendance monitoring letter and individual pupil attendance report, offering you the opportunity to rectify the situation in partnership with the school

All our persistent absentee pupils and their parents are subject to an Attendance Plan or home school contract that we will devise in liaison with the Education Support Advisor.

3.3v Procedures for dealing with pupil absence

Under The Education (School Attendance Targets, England) Regulations 2006, the governing body of Hook Junior School is required to monitor and support to reduce pupil absence from school.

Our procedure for ensuring all children are safe and attend school is as follows:

- We will date and initial notes from parents, records of telephone calls and medical certificates. We will store these in a secure place, as they may contain sensitive information.
- If an explanation for absence is not satisfactory, or if the absence continues, we will invite the parents to school to discuss any difficulties that are preventing the pupil from attending. We will do this as soon as possible, so that the problem is tackled early.
- If a child is repeatedly late, we will contact the parents. Repeated lateness can affect a pupil's education as much as poor attendance.
- We will update our absence records each week to detect short but frequent absences.
- All absences will be noted on the child's school record and annual Reports to Parents.

The Head Teacher will refer to the Education Support Advisor or the Legal Intervention Team when:

- Attendance is below 95% due to unauthorised absence
- 20 half day absences in a 10 week period
- 5 late sessions over a 10 week period
- Contacts with home have not brought about any improvement in attendance.
- Poor communication from home regarding explanations for absence/lateness.
- Frequent patterns of illness

Please note:

- The ultimate responsibility to authorise an absence rests with the Head Teacher, even if an absence is for illness
- A note or telephone call does not mean an absence will be authorised.
- In the case of illness the school has the right to request further information.
- If a child suffers repeated bouts of illness the Headteacher can make a referral to the school nurse. Where there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, school and the Locality Team can refer the matter to a school nurse or GP

3.3vi Medical and Dental Appointments

Routine appointments should be made outside of school hours. If an appointment is made in school time, an explanatory note should be sent to school on the day before the appointment. Parents (or an authorised adult over 16 years) should sign children out and back in again when attending appointments during the school day.

3.3vii Holidays during Term Time

The Department of Education are clear that there is no parental right for a family holiday and cost or experiences for the child, weather and overlapping with school holidays are not grounds upon which to authorise absence. Copies of the relevant Department for Education (DfE) regulations are available on request.

There are 175 days (13 weeks) of the school year when children are at home with their parents, school calendars are produced well in advance and this constitutes time when family holidays can be planned for and taken. Family holidays **should not** be taken in term time.

- Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. There is a negative impact on the child, the children in the class and their teacher when a child takes a holiday during term time.
- Any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2016 states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances.

SECTION 4

4.1 Request for leave of absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013:

The education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are rare, significant, unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There is no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holidays will be unauthorised.

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence must fill in an application form available from the website and school office **in advance and before making any travel arrangements**.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire County Councils' Code of Conduct, parents/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

The regulations stipulate that every request received must be considered on an individual basis. Even in the case of exceptional circumstances, the school must determine whether to approve the absence or not. In making this decision, primary consideration will be given to the child's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling, followed by the frequency of the request, the nature of the event for which leave is sought and whether the parent has given advance notice.

Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence and it will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

- Parents wishing to request leave of absence during term time for a child must do so in writing using the appropriate form (available on request from the school office or from the school website).
- Completed forms must be submitted to the Headteacher at least 10 days in advance for which leave is requested. Parents are strongly advised to apply for leave of absence before confirming any travel arrangements
- where leave of absence has not been authorised in advance, absence will be regarded as unauthorised
- Any leave of absence taken without the Headteacher's consent will be counted as unauthorised absence

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

The school will not be responsible for providing work to be completed during a child's absence.

Absence for Year 6 pupils will not be authorised under any circumstances during SATs week or in the weeks preceding and any unauthorised absence taken during these times will be subject to a penalty notice.

Absence during the first three weeks in September will not be authorised even in exceptional circumstances as this is an important settling in time for the children and will be subject to a penalty notice.

SECTION 5

Understanding types of absence – authorised and unauthorised

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

5.1 Authorised absence

Authorised absence is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised

5.2 Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request.

Examples of parentally condoned absences that will be unauthorised:

- holidays in term time
- cost of travel
- weddings, other than that of the parent or carer
- birthdays
- resting after a late night
- relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- a parent gives in to a pupil who wants to stay at home
- a parent is ill
- a parent is using the pupil as a childminder
- a pupil is supporting other members of the family

- work patterns, for example shift work, make it difficult for the family to ensure the child attends school
- a parent wants company
- a parent does not care whether the pupil attends school
- a parent has taken the pupil shopping
- a parent cannot control the pupil
- a parent has taken the pupil to the hairdresser
- a pupil is in paid work
- a parent is hostile towards the school or towards education in general
- a parent distrusts authority
- a parent is using the pupil as an interpreter
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been explained

All unauthorised absence will be noted on a child's school record and reported to the Education Support Worker and included in Government Data. The following registration codes will be used to denote unauthorised absence:

- O – unauthorised absence
- U – late (after register has closed at 8.46am)
- G – family holiday (not authorised)

We can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

5.3 Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil is to be defined as “persistently absent” when attendance is 90% or below.

Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. There is also clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement and we need parents' full support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

- PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.
- All PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan drawn up by the Headteacher, Inclusion Leader, Family Support Worker and/or Education Support Advisor.

SECTION 6

6.1 Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

6.2 Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures will be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- parenting orders
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- prosecution

Where a child has **unauthorised absence** the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct – issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from schools (2015)* or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The *Code of conduct* is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/code-of-conduct-issuing-penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence-from-schools-final.pdf>.

6.3 Penalty Notices for non-attendance – Hampshire's *Code of conduct*

The *Code of conduct* states that:

Schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive (codes G, U or O on the register)

- persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded *L*), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code *O*), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance

unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

Legal measures for absence taken when the headteacher has declined parents/carers' request for leave of absence

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. non-approval of a parent/carers' request for leave of absence or
2. a holiday that has been taken without permission

and the unauthorised absence (coded *G*) is for 10 or more sessions (five days) in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week period then a Penalty Notice for non-attendance will be issued.

If a child has other types of unauthorised absence (coded *O* and *U*) and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:

- 1 10 sessions (five days) of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week school period**
- 2 one or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.**

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carers who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parents/carers** for each child. **NB:** This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday, ie one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting

from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at:

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/InformationonPenaltyNoticesfornon-attendanceatschool-advicetoparentsandcarersleaflet-Nov2015revised.pdf>

SECTION 7

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending.

This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties.

It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

7.1 What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

- Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning.
- Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped.
- Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.
- Your child will bring home a school diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.
- Be interested in what your child is doing in school and as part of their Home Learning, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!
- Consistency and a caring, supportive home and school life will make the difference to your child's desire to attend school.

7.2 Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to the secondary school) parents are asked to:

- Give the Headteacher comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

7.3 Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

The regulations related to children participating in public performances are separate to those around authorising leave of absence. Headteachers may authorise this absence.

Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Parents must provide:

- a letter in support of the absence application
- a copy of their child's performance licence
- a letter/evidence from the agency indicating the nature of the performance, the reasons for the absence and the frequency
- details from the performance organisers of a named tutor/coach who will be providing the education for their child when absent under these conditions and provide copies of the programme of study.

7.4 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Parents must provide:

- a letter in support of the absence application
- a letter/evidence from the sport agency or coach indicating that the child is performing and competing at regional, county or national level, the reasons for the absence and the frequency.
- details from the sport club of a named tutor/coach who will be providing the education for their child when absent under these conditions and provide copies of the programme of study.

7.5 Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the *T* code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

SECTION 8

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies.

Date Reviewed:	20 th October 2017
Signed Headteacher	
Position	Headteacher
Chair of Governors	